

Subject: Basildon

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In response to several requests for information.

The situation in Basildon is pretty dire. There are two parts to it.

PART ONE

Irish Travellers - probably four extended families at Crays Hill Billericay where several adjacent plots have had planning permission for some time - mostly English Romanies many of whom have now been bought out by Irish Travellers.

At the last count on the new sites there were 46 adults (including single mothers) and 51 children. Several of the adults are elderly or have medical needs.

The appeals against the enforcement orders will be heard over three days in January (January 8-10) and will be decided by Prescott himself (in theory). We are trying to raise money from the families for a barrister - there is no way we can afford a planner with letters after their name for three days - as the planning fees required for the enforcement appeals alone before we even get to the Enquiry are well over £3,000. The Council also want £2,000 odd for a possible planning appeal to run alongside the enforcement appeals.

The problem with getting legal aid for some of the families who are on benefit is that those who are not on legal aid will still have to contribute a share of the experts' fees. The legal aid might cover say 6/30 of the total.

Much local opposition as some of you heard at a residents' meeting. There is a rumour that housedwellers are removing their children from the local school.

I am sending map etc to Grattan and Thomas who have promised to visit.

PART TWO - elsewhere in the district there is more happening

NB Basildon is a New Town built in the Green Belt so all land is Green Belt.

Barry Clarke and family - appeal to High Court against a criminal process just rejected. Have to leave. Possible fine up to £20,000. (Fine for being on your own land without permission is higher than that for criminal trespass)

Mr Wood and family (includes child with medical needs). Appealing against refusal of planning permission. Has been fined £1000. Next door is a Mr Temple hanging on - refused permission on appeal
NB There is a showman's site adjacent with permission.

Uptons. Waiting for result of appeal. Three grown up members of Upton family who now are married with their own families. Bought land across the road from father who has permission for one caravan - and has over ten

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grandchildren. Perhaps he should buy a large shoe like the old lady in the rhyme.

A Lowe and J Lowe. Hovefields area. This is a well established local family. Planning appeals next year (A Lowe refused once). About eight new families under threat near them in Hovefields (near the official site which is full with the waiting list closed to new entrants)

One isolated family at Sadlers Roundabout. I think CLP are doing a planning application for them.

Two appeals to High Court pending after planning refusal.- Mr Selway (lives in a caravan next to an empty house - Inspector rejected the T Clarke ruling) and two young men (ex mental patients - unfit to tow a caravan)

There are about fifteen other families still living on own land in Basildon after planning appeals turned down. Some have been fined, one has a suspended prison sentence. (List on request)

The only solution to this and similar situations elsewhere (in Essex also many sites under threat in Chelmsford, Rochford, Epping and Tilbury) is the Bill as none of the two (?) government initiatives (each announced about five times in accordance with New Labour practice) will help those Gypsies who are being forced into buying their own land.